

GSO Resolution Against Fee Increases

8 March 2011

Whereas, the Graduate Student Organization has continuously requested fee transparency and an explanation on how budget expenses are allocated toward graduate students services since July of 2010, and has been open to discuss fee increases, and has volunteered to work together to implement reasonable fee increases, but has deliberately been left out of any fee increase decisions,

Whereas, the administration has not published any detailed information to determine how our fees are used toward graduate students services and has not implemented a method to collectively determine fee increases,

Whereas, the administration has unilaterally decided to increase fees by \$209/year for graduate students, an 18% increase, without consulting the Graduate Student Organization,

Whereas, the proposed increases are not sensitive to student financial access and is over the 5.3% increase recommended by the Higher Education Price Index (<http://www.commonfund.org/CommonfundInstitute/HEPI/Pages/default.aspx>), directly violating SUNY policy to control broad-based fee increases,

Whereas, the technology fee will increase 38.8 % next year and Teaching, Learning + Technology has not disclosed detailed information about how this money is used; further, TLT has not fulfilled its commitment from 2006 to use graduate students' contributions to finance projects that directly benefit graduate students,

Whereas, the transportation fee will increase 16 % next year, yet we remain unaware of any efforts in place to improve transportation services either on campus, or satellite campuses,

Whereas, on-campus graduate housing costs will likely increase next year, and the administration has not been forthcoming in controlling rent increases,

Whereas, Long Island cost of living standards remain significantly higher than the rest of the nation, and off-campus housing rates continue to climb due to higher utilities and rent,

Whereas, Graduate Student Employees Union members have worked without a contract since 2007, thus not received the modest raises agreed with the state, the Stony Brook administration has decided not advocate on behalf of its employees to implement a contract, even though the contract is not at any negotiating stage, thus not violating any legal principles,

Whereas, the University administration supports a tuition hike of 5.5 %, this increase in public education will have an adverse effect on the higher public education system, directly affecting working class families and limiting diversity,

Whereas, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) has been cut for graduate students, and there is no state financial assistance for New York graduate students,

Whereas, the University administration is transferring the financial burden of the state proposed budget cuts to students and their working families, and expects students to increase their educational debt to pay for the proposed fee increases,

Whereas, SUNY administration is accepting a \$70 million budget cut without taking significant actions to show to NY State that SUNY cannot be cut further,

Be it RESOLVED, that the Graduate Student Organization of the State University of New York at Stony Brook,

Condemn the University's actions to leave the student body at large outside any decisions to increase fees,

Condemn the administration's lack of transparency regarding fee payments and expenditures,

Reject all fee increases, particularly ones that will not improve student services,

Refuse to condone fee increases until detailed fee budgets for the past five years are published online and remain accessible to the public,

Demand that the Stony Brook Administration implement fee waivers for non-funded students,

Demand that the Stony Brook Administration take an active stand and advocate on behalf of its graduate student employees to implement a contract with NY State,

Demand that the administration stop lobbying for tuition increases and further privatizing the State Public System of Higher Education.